



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

## DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH

February 17, 1993

Effective Date: March 12, 1993

### COMMISSIONER POLICY STATEMENT NO. 13

#### PATIENTS' PROPERTY RIGHTS

In consonance with Section 17a-541 of the Connecticut General Statutes which prohibits depriving any patient of "any personal, property or civil rights, including the right to vote, hold or convey property, and contract, except in accordance with due process of law, and unless he has been declared incompetent pursuant to sections 45a-686 to 45a-704, inclusive", Department of Mental Health facility regulations and procedures will be so constructed as to accord to all competent patients the right of access to and control of their own personal property without mediation by third parties, including family members. Conditions and circumstances requiring exception to this policy based on professional judgement at time of admission or later will be clearly documented in the medical record.

The above policy does not abrogate the duty of the facility staff to control the possession of weapons, alcohol and drugs, and other items prohibited within the facility as dangerous and detrimental to the safety and welfare of patients and staff or seriously destructive of the therapeutic program. Neither does it abrogate the duty of the facility staff, in coordination as appropriate with family and/or conservator, to provide guidance and assistance to the incompetent patient in the handling of personal property.

Provisions will be made for the safe storage of patients' valuable personal property and patients will be informed that such a service is available.

Albert J. Solnit, M.D.  
Commissioner

This directive replaces Commissioner's Policy Statement No. 13, dated February 20, 1985.

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